St. Leonards Neighbourhood Association
Exeter

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Charity Reg. No. 283568

I expect that you have seen the planning application (26/1537/FUL) made by The Deaf Academy to temporarily let out Mount Radford Lawn to Exeter Energy for a depot as they carry out works on the Heat Network project.
The link to the application is below. The important document to study is the **Planning Statement,** which details what it is they want to do and how careful they will be.

https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https://publicaccess.exeter.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=TMWKJIHBM3000/1/010101a1882dcc6d-12d7f615-04e6-41db-9d59-2a05d1e00653-000000/MOJ6RITO_crSSvTvzV8mUxZlQwtPV0roCxSsXq_S3Y4=452

The link below is to the Exeter Energy Heat Network pages, which tell you about the project they have in mind for Exeter.

https://1energy.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Exeter-Energy-Network-A2-panels-pr4-HR-compressed.pdf

Ideas for forming your views and putting them forward to Exeter City Council planning Dept.
If you feel inclined to write a reaction to this planning application then please do, but I thought I'd tell you how the SLNA will be responding.
I had been told of the likelihood of this happening about 18 months ago. The Deaf Academy wanted to use it as a way of funding the 'Community Social Space' project which is their stated ultimate goal for Mount Radford Lawn.
At first I thought that the way proceed would be to insist on certain conditions to any approval which might be given, such as timings, state of the restored field, work hours, activities it can be used for, etc. But I feel that there is a more detrimental affect to this application, in that it will delay the re-instatement of Mount Radford Lawn to the legally designated Community Asset which it is.

The Planning Statement accompanying the application states that it would be for a ***"period of two years ending in January 2028".*** Thus displaying how unrealistic this timescale is (see timescale information below). If this application were passed with no realistic start and end date it could be used as a reason for preventing the development of the Community Social Space which is the Deaf Academy's stated aim for this land.

After studying the Heat Network document we had serious doubts about the success of the project. ‘The first connection to the network should be by the end of 2026!’ The facts are that the Energy Centre planning application is still being studied. How the pipes will cross the canal and river has not been decided. About 200 metres of pipes going from and to nowhere have been laid under Trews Weir Reach and Belle Isle Drive. The Planning Statement says that they have explored other suitable sites and “*no suitable or available sites have been identified*”. The Belle Isle works depot is about to be vacated by the ECC and would be perfect for the job.

We will be suggesting to the Exeter City Council Planning Department that the Deaf Academy’s application be refused or set aside and the Deaf Academy should proceed with it’s stated aim of creating a Community Social Space on Mount Radford Lawn. The Lawn has been designated by them and a legal Tribunal, as an Asset Of Community Value and a Playing Field in the Exeter Local Plan. The Deaf Academy have been given plenty of time to make it so. Their progress has been lamentably slow and suspicions are that they are not serious in their intent, we suspect that this application is a blocking tactic to further delay returning the field to its designated use as a Playing Field. Compulsory Purchase has been considered once and was abandoned when the Deaf Academy announced their community-focussed intentions, but it does not prevent it from being considered again.

Please submit your comments to Exeter City Council, the link for responses is on the first page of the application.

Nigel FitzHugh.
Chairman